

# WHARF HOTELS

NICCOLO  
HOTELS

MARCO POLO  
HOTELS

**For Immediate Release**

## **Vale Mr Eric Waldburger** **The Hospitality World Loses One of its Statesmen** A Tribute to Former President, Marco Polo Hotels

*May 26 1949 – 10 April 2020*



*Eric Waldburger*

**Hong Kong SAR, China, 15 April 2020** – Eric Waldburger, a worldly statesman of the hospitality industry, brought to life a formidable career in international luxury hotel leadership. Combining Swiss precision with an entrepreneurial flair and visionary zest, he set the highest standards in senior management roles at some of the world's finest hotels. Sadly, he passed away on 10 April in Japan, after a short but hard fought battle.

A highly respected hotelier, Eric's career culminated with his role as President of the HK-based hospitality management company, Marco Polo Hotels (since renamed to Wharf Hotels) from 2012-2016. During this time he led the group through an expansive period with openings of new Marco Polo Hotels in China and the Philippines, as well as the launch of the first of its highly acclaimed luxury brand, Niccolo Hotels.

Eric's impressive accomplishments include leadership roles with iconic hotel names that set the foundation of today's luxury experiences, including Mandarin Oriental Macau, The Peninsula Hong Kong and The Ritz Carlton Hong Kong; as well as establishing Hutchison Whampoa's Harbour Plaza hotel group.

Through these roles it was his mentorship and innate leadership skills that have fostered more than one generation of passionate and dedicated hoteliers, providing the stepping stones of opportunity to grow and develop with the same enthusiasm and vitality as Eric himself. The many heart-warming and grateful messages are flowing around the global hospitality network, from legends of the industry, hotel owners and aspiring hospitality students to academics and corporate leaders, as we share and celebrate Eric's lifetime of experiences.

The innovative entrepreneur captivated all those who met him, with his life-long mission for mentoring talent and his natural ability to coach, he was relentless in pursuing his personal goals, as well as those of his team. In semi-retirement he had presided over his consulting firm, i Solutions and Concepts Ltd., as well as SPICE Coaching Ltd, the inspiring trailblazer was an ambitious leader with a goal-oriented vision and a determination to always walk-the-talk with humility and integrity.

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A man who would often quote “Wherever you are headed, enjoy it!”, positivity was inherent in his outlook and paved the way for him to author his motivational book dedicated to his family - wife Naoko and children Marc and Tanya. His “Live Life With Spice” book was his answer to modern corporations’ pressing concerns, and his approach to living with a light heart through his SPICE acronym that reads as a reflection to his own values; sparkling, passionate, inspiring, credible and engaging.

Dr Jennifer Cronin, President, Wharf Hotels said, “We are deeply saddened by Eric’s passing, we have lost one of our industry’s legends and statesmen. His joie-de-vivre and gusto for coaching the next generation as one of his life’s missions is reflected in the people we work with here at Wharf Hotels, many of whom had the privilege of progressing under Eric’s leadership. The world has lost an advocate of knowledge-sharing and an accomplished ground breaker, he was definitely a frontrunner in the disruptor movement, a man ahead of his time. I am personally grateful to have had the opportunity to work alongside him and be guided into my current role where many of his leadership principles still hold true for all our General Managers and hotel community through his Red Ring leadership philosophy. He will be greatly missed and we send our heartfelt condolences to Naoko, Marc and Tanya, we will be forever grateful to you for sharing him with us”.

In lieu of flowers we are proud to honour his legacy with the family’s wishes that memorials are made to The Hong Kong Poly University’s School of Hotel & Tourism Management in the name of the Eric Waldburger Memorial Scholarship, which will support aspiring hoteliers along their lifelong journey of learning. Please make your donations online:

<https://www.polyu.edu.hk/giving/give-now/online-donation/> and follow these steps:

1. Go to section 3) Purpose of Donation
2. Select: Other, please specify
3. Input: SHTM – The Eric Waldburger Memorial Scholarship

If you’d like to donate by cheque, please make it payable to The Hong Kong Polytechnic University and send it to Pauline Ngan, School of Hotel & Tourism Management, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, 17 Science Museum Road, TST East, Kowloon, Hong Kong. Any enquiries can be directed to Pauline who will be the liaison for the creation of a scholarship fund – **The Eric Waldburger Memorial Scholarship**.

Pauline’s contacts are [pauline.ngan@polyu.edu.hk](mailto:pauline.ngan@polyu.edu.hk) or +852 3400 2634



*“If you have a dream, don’t sit on it. Realise it!”*, Live Life With Spice,  
Eric Waldburger, 1949 – 2020

Thank you Eric for helping us realise our dreams and living yours with such high octane energy, may you be polishing your red Ferrari with the perfect martini in hand!

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## About Wharf Hotels The Spirit of Discovery

Emanating the spirit of discovery, Wharf Hotels, a wholly owned subsidiary of The Wharf (Holdings) Ltd, is based in Hong Kong SAR of China, and currently operates 17 owned or managed hotels under Niccolo or Marco Polo Hotels in China, Hong Kong and the Philippines. Niccolo Hotels was added to the group's portfolio in 2015 as the luxury collection, positioning the brand as contemporary chic. The Murray, Hong Kong, a Niccolo Hotel, the brand's flagship hotel, was ranked as the top hotel in the city within a year of its opening, and the upcoming opening of Niccolo Suzhou will bring the brand's collection to 5 hotels following the successes of Niccolo Chengdu, Chongqing and Changsha. Marco Polo's international deluxe hotels in established locations within China, Hong Kong and the Philippines maintain their ethos to explore, discover and experience a destination, drawing on the philosophies of their namesake, Marco Polo: an adventurer, a traveller, an entrepreneur and a connoisseur of culture - just as Marco Polo's modern travellers are today. Wharf Hotels is a member of the Global Hotel Alliance.

Further details are available at [wharfhoteles.com](http://wharfhoteles.com).

## About Global Hotel Alliance

Global Hotel Alliance (GHA) is the world's largest alliance of independent hotel brands, bringing together more than 35 brands with over 570 hotels in 78 countries. GHA uses a shared technology platform to drive incremental revenues and create cost savings for its member brands. GHA's award-winning loyalty programme, DISCOVERY, provides 16 million members exclusive opportunities to immerse themselves in local culture wherever they travel. For more information, visit [globalhotelalliance.com](http://globalhotelalliance.com)

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